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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 YEREVAN 002387

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN, EUR/SNEC, IO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV AM UNGA

SUBJECT: GOAM DENIES SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, REQUESTS USG SUPPORT IN THE UNGA

REFS: A) USUN NEW YORK 2339 B) USUN NEW YORK 2413

¶11. (U) Sensitive But Unclassified. Please treat accordingly.

SUMMARY

¶12. (SBU) In a strongly-worded diplomatic note addressed to the Embassy October 28, the Government of Armenia denied any illegal activity in the occupied territories and requested that the United States vote against the inclusion of the new agenda item proposed by Azerbaijan for inclusion in the 59th General Assembly. End Summary.

TEXT OF GOAM DIPLOMATIC NOTE NO. 8/12007

¶13. (SBU) The English-language text of the diplomatic note follows. Begin Text:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Armenia

No. 8/12007

The Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Armenia presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and has the honor to refer to the new agenda item presented by the Republic of Azerbaijan for inclusion into the agenda of the 59th session of the UN General Assembly.

The Ministry would kindly ask the Embassy to take into consideration the following. The matter that is being raised by Azerbaijan is neither a matter of urgency, nor in fact a real issue. Azerbaijan states that the four UN Security Council resolutions remain unimplemented. Indeed, Armenia has done exactly as the resolutions state, and used its good offices to ameliorate the situation. That is why in the face of Azerbaijan's continued refusal to talk to the leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia continues to negotiate with Azerbaijan.

As for the existence of 'illegal activities' in the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, suffice it to say that each time Azerbaijan raises this issue in one or another international forum, Armenia responds by inviting any legitimate delegation to visit the region and see for themselves. Azerbaijan consistently opposes international observers' visits to the territories. (An offer was made in April to the UN Office on Drug and Crime. Another offer was made in June to UNESCO. Both times, Armenians extended the invitation, and Azerbaijan blocked the effort.)

Still, Azerbaijan continues to make unfounded allegations. Their most recent effort involves the politically loaded term 'settlements'. This motion is a politically motivated effort to manipulate opinion, to create the kind of environment, which Azerbaijan believes will provide it with dividends both domestically and abroad. Instead, what it will surely do is derail the peace process, which despite Azerbaijan's public outcries involves substantive explorations of prospects and possibilities.

The focus of these negotiations is the issues of refugees, territories and the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. The issue of territories continues to remain part of the package that is being negotiated. Until those negotiations are concluded, journalists, international aid workers, delegations from think tanks and academic and political institutions visit the region regularly, travel through those territories, and have never raised the issue of

Armenian settlements there. There are no Armenian settlements there.

The most recent conflict resolution proposal which was produced as a result of talks between the presidents of the two countries itemizes in detail all the steps necessary for a final settlement: status of Nagorno-Karabakh, withdrawal timeline, demilitarized zones and return of refugees, peacekeepers. In a word, every problematic subject is covered. There is not a single word there on settlements. Again, that is because there are no Armenian settlements there.

Various European institutions have rapporteurs assigned to the region who are particularly interested in the conflict and regularly prepare reports on their visits. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office Special Envoy on the Nagorno-Karabakh problem writes detailed monthly reports on the region. He includes a wide array of information, including much that is not specifically within his mandate, but which is relevant to the conflict and its context. In none of those reports is there a single mention of settlements.

This non-issue is being artificially raised by Azerbaijan to the level of urgent problem. Armenia has 400,000 refugees of its own as a result of this 15-year-old conflict. There could not be such settlements or even a policy as the Armenians have intentionally refrained from encouraging such settlements. Even though they may have provided some domestic dividends, they would clearly complicate the process of a lasting resolution.

The Armenian side is ready to host any groups or observers who wish to come and personally see the situation on those lands for themselves. It will be eminently clear that there is no "new demographic situation" there.

The Government of Armenia would very much appreciate if the Government of the United States votes against the inclusion of this agenda item raised by Azerbaijan at the 59th session of the General Assembly to avert this attempt of Azerbaijan to further politicize the issue at this crucial time in the negotiation process.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States the assurances of its highest consideration.

October 28

Embassy of the
United States of America
Yerevan
End Text.

COMMENT

¶4. (SBU) While we concur overall with the unhelpfulness of the proposed agenda item, we can in no way certify to the facts alleged in this diplomatic note, particularly not the assertion that there are 400,000 refugees in Armenia.
EVANS